**WUDL Debate Jargon Cheat Sheet**

Our hope is to demystify some of the jargon used by debaters for judges (and students). If there is something that we’ve missed, don’t hesitate to reach out, and we’ll add it. We’ve organized this document by clusters of related terms, instead of alphabetically.

**Logistics:**

**Policy Debate:** a format of debate (2x2) centered on answering a question of public policy. Policy is characterized by long speech times, and significant use of research. The affirmative team offers a “plan” of action by the federal government, and the negative rebuts the specifics of that plan.

**Debate Tournament:** A gathering of three or more schools where students from different institutions will face each other in a competitive setting.

**Debate Round:** A single engagement between two debate teams. Tournaments feature multiple debate rounds.

**Debate Team:** A pair of students from the same school debating together for a tournament.

**Debate Squad:** All of the students from a particular school who participate in debate.

**WUDL Debate Divisions:** Debate teams compete in 3 Divisions: Novice, Junior Varsity, and Varsity. These are based on experience and skill, not age or grade level.

**Tab Room:** The tab, or tabulation room is the nerve center where the tournament is run. Pairings are decided here, ballots are distributed and collected here, and the tournament staff is generally found in this room.

**Pairing:** A document that describes the matchups during a specific debate round. It covers who is debating who, where each debate will take place, and who is judging each debate. A new pairing is issued describing the details of each debate round.

**Ballot:** The ballot is the document filled out by the judge to indicate the winner and loser of each debate round, the points earned by each debater in each round, and is also used to provide written feedback about the round.

**Basics of Argumentation:**

**Argument:** A statement of opinion supported with evidence. A properly constructed argument has a claim and supporting warrant(s).

* **Claim:** A statement you believe or are trying to prove
* **Warrant:** Reason why the claim is true
* **Evidence/“card”:** A quotation from a published, hopefully scholarly source used in a debate. Evidence should include a claim, a proper citation, and a block of text that has been highlighted to identify the key points to be read in the speech (leaving the context of the quotes available for analysis by the other team). Debaters refer to individual pieces of evidence as “cards,” a reminder of when debaters copied their evidence from books and taped them to notecards. They should read the author’s name and the publication date in the round.
* **Tag:** A summary of the claim(s) and supporting evidence in a piece of evidence, or “card.”

**Flow:** A system of note taking to keep track of arguments in a debate round. Usually done in columns to track the progression of arguments across multiple speeches. Every debater and judge should have a “flow” of every debate round they participate in.

**Extend:** Continuing an argument from a previous speech into the next speech. Arguments must be extended from speech to speech to stay active in the debate round, and to be evaluated by the judge at the end.

**Drop:** Not answering an argument or not extending an argument previously made. If an argument is “dropped,” it is considered conceded.

**Debate Terms:**

**Resolution:** The statement around which the debate is centered. The phrasing of Resolutions governs what is on and what is off topic.

**Affirmative (AFF):** The team that presents a plan supports some part of the resolution.

**Negative (NEG):** The team proving that the affirmative plan is a bad idea, or not part of the resolution.

**Constructive:** 8 minute, evidence heavy speech that builds arguments for the round. All new arguments must be made in constructive speeches. Every debater will give 1 constructive during a round.

**Rebuttal:** 5 minute speech full of analysis where students choose their strongest arguments and make their case to the judge why their team should win. Every debater will give one rebuttal per round.

**Cross Examination:** a 3 minute period where debaters ask questions of their opponents to clarify what was just said and set up future arguments.

**Prep Time:** Each team is given 8 minutes to prepare for their speeches over the course of the debate. They can use it at any point before their speeches in any increment.

**Negative Block:** Back to back speeches by the negative in the middle of the debate (the 2NC, CX, then the 1NR). These speeches are treated as 1 speech, and should cover different arguments instead of repeating themselves.

**Presumption:** It is riskier to act than to stay with the status quo. If the affirmative doesn’t offer an inherent plan with solvency and an advantage, then stick with the status quo and vote negative**.**

**Offense:** Reasons to vote for us

**Defense:** Reasons not to vote for them

**Impact Calculus:** Risk analysis done by a debater comparing the affirmative and negative impacts. Usually centered on concepts such as timeframe, probability, and magnitude.

**Cases:**

**Affirmative Team’s Case (Presented in the 1AC):**

Should include: Plan, Inherency, Solvency, and Advantages (All Divisions).

* **Plan:** Statement of proposed action by the federal government. Lynchpin of the debate.
* **Inherency:** The reason or barrier that keeps the plan from being happening in the status quo.
* **Solvency:** The effectiveness of the plan/negative advocacy to work
* **Advantages:** Argument about how the plan will change the world for the better.

**Negative Team Case(s):** The Negative team’s counter arguments to the Affirmative’s idea/proposal, proving that the affirmative plan is a bad idea, or not part of the resolution. The strongest negative strategies offer multiple, varied reasons why the plan is a bad idea.

* **On Case Arguments:** Direct responses to the affirmative team’s case/claims
* **Off Case Arguments:** Arguments that negate the affirmative team’s case, but aren’t direct refutations of the affirmative case.

1. **Disadvantage/ “DA” / “Disad”:** Argument saying the plan will change the world for the worse.

**Uniqueness:** A description of the status quo/existing trends

**Link:** Argument about how the action of the plan sets in motion events that change the status quo

**Internal Link:** Step between the Link and the Impact that tells the story of the argument being made

**Impact:** Something bad that will happen, or something good that won’t happen because of the link

**Link Turn:** An argument that agrees that the impact is bad, but plan action will instead make it worse

**Non-Unique:** an argument that the problem is inevitable and not impacted by the plan

**Impact Turn:** An argument that says that something one team thinks is bad is actually good

**Double Turn:** When you link and impact turn the same argument, contradicting yourself

1. **Topicality:** A negative argument saying the affirmative plan doesn’t affirm the resolution/is “off topic”
   1. **Interpretation:** Definition of what the topic should/should not include
   2. **Violation:** What the affirmative did wrong (at least according to the negative team)
   3. **Standards:** Why they should lose the debate: usually centered around fairness and education
2. **Counterplan (CP):** A negative advocacy that there is a mutually exclusive, net beneficial way to do the affirmative plan. Counterplans have a CP text, solvency, and a “net benefit” (advantage over the plan). (Junior Varsity and Varsity Divisions only)
3. **Kritik:** A negative advocacy that questions the assumptions, or ethical system of the affirmative case. Kritiks have links, impacts, and “alternatives” which describe a preferable, mutually exclusive action. (Junior Varsity and Varsity Divisions only)